

# JACOB MARLEY'S LAMENT

## By Bobby Keniston

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# JACOB MARLEY'S LAMENT

*A ten minute comedic monologue*

**By Bobby Keniston**

**SYNOPSIS:** We all know that Jacob Marley played a large part in bringing about the redemption of Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' classic *A Christmas Carol*. Now hear how the poor dead man feels to still be walking the Earth shackled in chains while Scrooge is alive and well, raking in karma points in a bid for Heaven! This ten minute monologue gives a wacky spin to this iconic character, and asks the following question: is a good deed really its own reward? God bless us, every one!

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(1 Male)*

JACOB MARLEY (m) ..... An unfortunate spirit, who must wander the Earth, bearing thick and heavy chains, as punishment for all of the sins he committed during his lifetime. He's a little bitter about it.

## DEDICATION

*For Tracy Sue (or should I say "Belle"?)*

**AT RISE:** *JACOB MARLEY is dressed as you would expect him to be--- in his counting house clothes and his thick, heavy chains. He is ghostly, and, at the moment, a little annoyed and sad.*

**JACOB MARLEY:** *(With great sadness.)* My name is Jacob Marley, and I am dead. Dead as a doornail, in fact. Believe me, there is no doubt that I am dead. Everyone knows I'm gone: the clerk, the clergyman, the undertaker, and, of course, my business partner, Ebenezer Scrooge. Dead, dead, dead. That's me.

*(After a slight beat.)* Dead as a doornail. Huh. I personally have never gauged just HOW dead a doornail can be, but, perhaps I should not think too much about it.

I am doomed to walk the Earth, shackled in my ponderous chains for all Eternity, each individual link a reminder of my sins, my avarice, my hard and cold pirit. For all the miles I tread in my counting house, my money-changing hole, I must now travel across the land of the living, bearing this unfathomable weight, finding no joy, no peace, no rest, no sleep. My soul is condemned, a prisoner of my self-inflicted torment, for, yea, I created this chain, forged it myself, link by link, yard by yard. *(He lets out a cry of sorrow and rage.)* Oh, but that I had realized that mankind was my business, before it was too late! Had I but set my eyes on the greater good outside of my greed, my unending desire for wealth!

*(With a shift in tone.)* But Ebenezer Scrooge is doing well, I hear. From what I am told, he keeps Christmas with him every day of the year, carries it deep within his heart, which, once cold, is now filled to bursting with the warmth of love and charity. His generosity knows no bounds. Why, he even saved Tim Cratchit from an early grave! He has come so far from the man who once uttered, "If they had rather die, let them do so and decrease the surplus population." He has tirelessly worked away his sins and broken free of his chains. Yes, to hear tell of it, Scrooge is as happy as a pickpocket in a home for the wealthy blind.

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Why shouldn't he be happy? He shall no longer share my horrid fate.

*Pause.*

*(A little catty.)* How nice for him. We set out to save him, the other ghosts and I, and we did it. Lovely.

Lovely, lovely, lovely.

No matter what punishments may lay ahead for me, at least I hold the knowledge that I have saved another.

It seems odd that no one tried to save me before I croaked. Not one single ghost showed up in my room, or superimposed their face on my door knocker. Not one. Some people get four, I guess, and some people get bubkes. Who makes the rules? I have no idea.

*Pause. Jacob attempts to compose himself.*

But I am happy for Scrooge, of course. In life, he was my partner. And my best friend. I am thankful for the miracle of his deliverance, the salvation we have brought to him!

Good old Ebenezer. *(Slight pause.)* Funny how things just seem to fall into his lap!

Yes, even redemption was served up to him on a silver platter, and all he had to do was take a bite. All the work was practically done for him. True, we still had to spoon feed it to him, and he fought us at every step, but eventually he swallowed it down like a good little boy.

And it was worth it, especially for all the good he's doing now. All that good he's doing with the money he made from his wicked miserliness. Well, I should say from OUR wicked miserliness. I did help start the business after all, and it was my solid know-how that helped our money lending endeavor survive in the first few rough years. If all the decisions had been left to Scrooge, why, there would be no money now for him to throw around to different charities. He wouldn't even have a house if I hadn't taken him on as a partner! Don't believe the sign that said "Scrooge and Marley". When it came to hard work, our business was undoubtedly "Marley and Scrooge." He'd be out begging in the streets instead of changing lives with OUR money!

One might think that since I earned the bulk of our wealth, that maybe, just maybe, I am entitled to a few of the karma points that Scrooge is raking in, but it looks like it doesn't work that way for old Jacob Marley, does it? No links off of this chain! Marley's dead, who cares about him? He didn't change his ways before the final buzzer, so just forget him! No "Get out of Hell Free" card for you, bub! Enjoy your punishment, it lasts forever!

Maybe if I had been visited by Christmas Past, Present, and Future on Christmas Eve, I could have changed my ways, too. Unfortunately, I was a bit busy DYING, and becoming a ghost myself! That's right, Universe. Instead of sending me help on Christmas Eve, you send me death! Instead of a shot at redemption, I get a stroke!

*He lets out another howl of rage and frustration, then takes a moment to calm himself.*

Scrooge on the other hand, well, what a fine opportunity to save a soul, and I'm glad we all took it. Me and the Three Spirits, pulling out all the stops for such a worthy candidate to make his way to Heaven. Show him a few old movies of his little sister and the chick who dumped him, give him a few drinks of the Milk of Human Kindness with a guy wearing a wreath in his hair, and then plop him down in front of his own tombstone with a mute hooded figure, and would you look at that--- suddenly he's Mr. Wonderful with a heart of Gold! In one single, solitary night, he goes from a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner, into a candidate for sainthood! Talk about a full turnaround. A complete one-eighty. It's practically unbelievable!

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